

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-07 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 PM-03 DODE-00 SP-02 EUR-08 /048 W

----- 105726

R 241359Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9253

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 5620

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SY PLO EG

SUBJ: SYRO-PALESTINIAN MANEUVERINGS AT COLOMBO

1. SUMMARY: SYRIA HOLDS CAIRO RESPONSIBLE FOR ORCHESTRATING
ANTI-SYRIAN MOVES BY PLO AT COLOMBO. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL ADVISOR ADIB DAOUDI AUGUST 23
IN DISCUSSING WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS A NEW STALEMATE IN
SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE, REVIEWED SOME OF THEIR BYPLAY
AT THE COLOMBO NAC. HE RECALLED FIRST THAT SYRIAN
FONMIN KHADDAM HAD AGREED WITH PLO REP QADDUMI IN DAMASCUS
WHEN THEY SIGNED THE JULY 27 SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT
THAT IT WOULD BE UNADVISABLE TO INJECT SYRO-PALESTINIAN
DIFFERENCES INTO THE COLOMBO DEBATES. THIS KHADDAM/
QADDUMI UNDERTAKING ENDURED THROUGH THE FONMINS MEETING
IN COLOMBO PREPARATORY TO THE SUMMIT. AFTER THE ARRIVAL
OF THE CHIEFS OF STATE AT COLOMBO, HOWEVER, SYRIA LEARNED
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THAT THE PLO PROPOSED TO CIRCULATE A DRAFT RESOLUTION

CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES FROM LEBANON AS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS ENDING THAT CRISIS. AT COLOMBO PLO RECEIVED A SERIES OF INSTRUCTIONS FROM ARAFAT IN BEIRUT WHICH WERE TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY THERE.

3. KHADDAM WARNED QADDUMI THAT IF THE PLO INSISTED ON THIS COURSE OF ACTION, SYRIA WOULD ASK ITS OWN DRAFT BE CIRCULATED. SYRIAN DRAFT WOULD REFER TO THE DAMASCUS AGREEMENT. KHADDAM ADVISED THE PLO TO WITHDRAW ITS RESOLUTION OR, AS DAOUDI NOTED, "IN HIS INIMITABLE FASHION KHADDAM THREATENED THAT PLO WOULD SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES." KHADDAM ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IF THE PLO FELT SOME SPECIAL RESOLUTION ON LEBANON WAS NEEDED, IT SHOULD BE CONFINED TO REPETITION OF THE BRIEF TEXT ANNOUNCED AT THE END OF THE ALGIERS NACC IN JUNE.

4. KHADDAM AND QADDUMI COULD NOT AGREE AND THE QUESTION OF A DRAFT RESOLUTION WAS REFERRED TO THE 85-NATION DRAFTING COMMITTEE WHERE THE PLO REP FROM CAIRO DEMANDED THE FLOOR. HE STATED THAT THE DAMASCUS DRAFT WAS UNACCEPTABLE BECAUSE OF ITS REFERENCE TO THE DAMASCUS ACCORD WHICH HAD NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY ALL PARTIES. PLO REP THEN LAUNCHED A TIRADE AGAINST SYRIA. PLO POSITION WAS SUPPORTED BY EGYPTIAN REP AND FURTHER ENDORSED BY IRAQI REP. SYRIAN REP ON THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE, ALLAF (SYRIAN PERMREP TO UN), THEN GOT TO HIS FEET TO OBJECT ON POINT OF ORDER THAT DRAFTING COMMITTEE WAS NOT PROPER FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER AND THAT PLO WAS OUT OF ORDER. SYRIA, ALLAF ADDED, HELD THAT IF PLO OR ANY OTHERS OBJECTED STRENUOUSLY TO REFERENCE TO DAMASCUS ACCORD THEN SYRIA WOULD WITHDRAW ITS RESOLUTION AND RECOMMEND THE ORIGINAL NACC TEXT BE REUSED. CHRIAMAN OF DRAFTING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED ACCEPTANCE OF SYRIAN POSITION AND THIS CORRIED THE DAY.

5. DAOUDI AGREED GLUMLY WITH AMBASSADOR'S OBSERVATION THAT SYRIA APPARENTLY WON A PARLIAMENTARY VICTORY BUT THAT BYPLAY APPEARED TO HAVE RETURNED SYRO-PALESTINIAN DIALOGUE TO STATUS QUO ANTE THE JULY DAMASCUS ACCORD. DAOUDI SAID
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HE HAD NO IDEA WHAT IF ANY NEW INITIATIVES, EITHER POLITICAL OR MILITARY, AFFECTING SYRO-PALESTINIAN OR SYRO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS MIGHT BE IN PROSPECT BEYOND THE CALL FOR AN ARAB SUMMIT (SEPTEL) AND CHAMOUN'S DEMAND THAT THE LEBANESE CRISIS BE RAISED AT UNGA. PERSONALLY, HE THOUGHT CHAMOUN'S IDEA WAS A NONSTARTER.

6. COMMENT:

DAOUDI WAS CLEARLY IRRITATED BY WHAT HE SAW AS
ORCHESTRATION BY CAIRO OF PLO'S MANEUVERINGS AT COLOMBO.
OTHERWISE HE SAID NOTHING TO DISPEL OUR IMPRESSION THAT
THE QUESTIONS OF SYRIA'S RELATIONS WITH BOTH EGYPT AND
THE PLO ARE ONCE AGAIN IN A STATE OF DRIFT, WITH ALL THE
CONSEQUENCES THIS IMPLIES FOR CONTINUED CONFLICT
IN LEBANON.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, NONALIGNED NATIONS MEETINGS, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC05620
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760323-0618
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760827/aaaaawjc.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <11 MAY 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SYRO-PALESTINIAN MANEUVERINGS AT COLOMBO
TAGS: PFOR, SY, EG, PLO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006